

Business Enterprises Program for the Blind

Great Career Opportunities for Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Business Enterprises Program for the Blind (BEP) in consultation with the California Vendor's Policy Commission provides the Department of Rehabilitation consumers, who are legally blind, opportunities to operate cafeterias, snack bars, and vending stands and routes, with the goal of becoming independent entrepreneurs capable of achieving their fullest potential through self-employment.

The program was created through federal legislation, the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, which was enacted to "provide blind persons with remunerative employment, enlarging the economic opportunities of the blind, and stimulating the blind to greater efforts in striving to make themselves self-supporting."

BEP conducts training for blind consumers in various aspects of food service and vending machine businesses. Upon satisfactory completion of training, individuals will have the opportunity to be selected for a BEP facility.

FACTS

- In Federal fiscal year 2008 BEP vendors had gross sales of \$39 million operating in state and federal buildings, correctional facilities, roadside rests and military installations.
- In 2008, vendors in the BEP had a net profit of more than \$6.1 million and received more than \$900,000 in retirement, health, and other benefits.
- In 2008, the BEP had 134 vendors and 151 facilities.
- The BEP currently has 2,499 vending machines in operation in state and federal buildings, correctional facilities and roadside rest stops.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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